probable causes and affects of the recurring floods and erosion in southern foothills of Bhutan and adjoining plains in India and recommend to both the Governments, appropriate and a mutually acceptable remedial measures. The first meeting of JGE was held in Bhutan in November, 2004. The JGE had series of discussions and also made several field visits to some of the affected areas. On the recommendations of the JGE, a Joint Technical Team (JTT) has been formed to undertake site visits of the affected areas and also make an assessment of the problem.

Content of Nitrate in Ground Water

†1538. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report of the Central Ground Water Board about the presence of high content of nitrates in the drinking water in most parts of the country;

(b) the reasons for high content of nitrates in ground water;

(c) whether Government have inquired into the fact that due to the high content of nitrates the number of cancer patients, heart patients and other patients are increasing; and

(d) the steps being taken by Government to ensure that the content of nitrate in drinking water does not exceed the prescribed level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. Nitrate content in excess of the desirable limit of 45 mg/1 has been reported by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) from ground water sources in localized pockets in various parts of the country.

(b) High content of nitrates in ground water is caused by municipal wastes in urban centers and agriculture activities in rural areas.

(c) As reported by the Ministry of Health, as per WHO guidelines of Drinking Water Quality, the weight of evidence is strongly against there being an association between nitrite and nitrate exposures in humans and the risk of cancer. There is slight protective effect of these ions on the cardiovascular systems.

(d) Water being a State subject, it is primarily the responsibility of the concerned State Governments to formulate schemes to provide people with contamination free water. However, the CGWB monitors ground water

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

quality periodically to map the changes in it and apprises the State Governments of the same for taking necessary remedial measures. It has also drilled exploratory wells tapping contamination free aquifer zones and has handed over these wells to the State Governments for utilisation.

Besides, the Department of Drinking Water Supply, under the Ministry of Rural Development, is rendering financial and technical assistance to the States for tackling water quality problems in rural areas through a Centrally Sponsored Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). 15% of ARWSP funds have been exclusively earmarked for Sub Mission project for tackling water quality problems. With effect from 01.04.1998, powers to sanction Sub Mission projects have been delegated to States.

Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Project in Baramullah

1539. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Pakistan Indus Commissioner along with Pak delegation had come to India to discuss about Kishanganga Hydro-electric Project in Baramullah district of Jammu and Kashmir; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) the 93rd meeting of Permanent Indus Commission was recently held from 9th to 13th February, 2005 to endeavour to resolve Pakistan's objections on the Kishangaga Hydroelectric Project. During the meeting Pakistan side sought to take recourse to Article IX of the Treaty dealing with Settlement of Differences and Disputes and the Pakistan Commissioner read out six pre-formulated questions to be discussed under the said Article.

The Indian Commissioner stated that clarifications had been sought by both sides on certain aspects of the design, a better understanding of each others perceptions had been reached especially on the relevance of data/information sought and the Commission also had agenda to have direct interaction between the specialists of the two sides so as to arrive at mutually accepted design. The Indian Commissioner therefore stated that the stage of Article IX has not reached and urged to continue the deliberations in the cooperative spirit envisaged in the Treaty. Pakistan Commissioner however reiterated that the questions are to be examined and resolved by the Commission through agreement.